

## Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers August 22, 2005

### NETS Features

#### **End-of-summer drunk driving crackdown began last Friday**

Michigan law enforcement officials announced on Friday that more than \$850,000 in federal traffic safety funds have added a variety of equipment that will assist law enforcement officers across the state with efforts to detect and arrest drunk drivers as they prepared to launch the statewide You Drink & Drive. You Lose. drunk driving crackdown that began on Friday. More...

[http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593\\_3504-124480--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593_3504-124480--,00.html)

#### **Driver Distraction: What Is Current Research Telling Employers**

When it comes to driver distraction, we've come a long way from just tuning the car radio. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), distracted driving behaviors are now responsible for 20 to 30 percent of all traffic crashes. And with the growing number of in-vehicle and wireless technologies, the situation is expected to get worse. More.....

[http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/distraction\\_081505feat.asp](http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/distraction_081505feat.asp)

### Latest Traffic Safety News

#### **New Alert System For Truckers Now Available**

According to developers, a new system has been created to assist truck drivers in making use of their idle time. Truckers Eye, would alert truck drivers when it is possible to proceed after they have been stopped for a long time. The device would allow drivers to be productive during idle time—allowing them to fill out logbooks rather than looking out the window waiting for the situation to change. The alert system can also work with CB radios. For more information visit

<http://www.trucknews.com/article.asp?id=45945&issue=07292005>

#### **IIHS: Simple Remedies Can Prevent Urban Roadway Crashes**

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), motorists drive 2 billion miles every day on urban arterial roads, and about 8,000 deaths and more than 1 million injuries occur on these roads. These crashes aren't occurring haphazardly. The Institute reports that many of these crashes happen in predictable locations and involve predictable sequences of contributing events. While many remedies can be expensive, IIHS says that some fixes are simple and inexpensive. For more information visit [http://www.iihs.org/news\\_releases/2005/pr080305.htm](http://www.iihs.org/news_releases/2005/pr080305.htm)

#### **Insurance Companies Put Tracking Technology To The Test**

Relying on advanced technology to track aspects of driving, insurance companies are using the data to determine customer policy rates. The concept: The safer a motorist drives, the cheaper the payment. According to the results thus far, the lure of big discounts is influencing driving behaviors. In Minnesota, about 4,800 drivers are testing "TripSense," developed by Progressive. Under the system, drivers are required to download the data from their vehicle and send it electronically to Progressive. Knowing upfront what behaviors yield discounts, drivers have a choice to not send the information and instead pay their regular rate. However, a similar test in the UK does not allow drivers to choose. Referred to as "pay as you go insurance," the data is automatically sent to the insurance provider.

Read the full article at

[http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/technology/maney/2005-08-03-car-monitoring\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/technology/maney/2005-08-03-car-monitoring_x.htm)

### **Share The Road Website Addresses Truck, Passenger Vehicle Safety**

The American Trucking Associations (ATA) has launched a website instructing motorists how to safely drive around tractor-trailers. Sponsored by Mack trucks and Chevron DELO, the "Share the Road" website aims to teach and alert motorists of the large blind spots experienced by truck drivers, as well as the additional following and stopping distances needed by trucks. It is estimated that car drivers cause about 75 percent of truck-related fatalities. Read the full article at <http://www.trucknews.com/article.asp?id=46111&issue=08042005>

### **Airbag Scams On The Rise**

Thousands of vehicles with inoperable airbags are roaming the nation's roadways. In many cases, the driver is completely unaware that the vehicle they are driving is missing its airbag. Experts are warning that the high costs associated with airbag repair and lack of federal regulation is leading to a scary trend: fake airbag scams. Fake airbag covers and \$40 switches to make warning systems indicate that the system is operable pale in comparison to the \$1,000 or so it would cost to repair airbags correctly and safely. In fact, shops stand to make hundreds of dollars by falsifying repairs. To date, there is no federal legislation pertaining to airbag repair. Now manufacturers, insurers, and states are beginning to address the issue. Read the full article at <http://www.abrn.com/abrn/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=172749>

### **Report: EDR Laws Could Hinder Insurance Underwriting**

Provisions in laws regulating the data collected by event data recorders (EDRs) could negatively impact insurance underwriting, according to a new report by the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC). The report draws on the new law in North Dakota that prohibits an insurer from using EDR data as a condition for setting rates. As more research is being conducted to test "miles driven" and "pay as you go" insurance policies, the report suggests that future EDR laws could hinder an insurer's ability to offer such policies. The report also investigates the debates surrounding EDRs including privacy rights and ownership of the data. Read the release at <http://www.namic.org/newsreleases05/050725nr3.asp>

### **Putting Crash Avoidance Devices, Systems To The Test**

Crash avoidance devices are expected to be the next big thing in automotive safety, but according to one researcher at IIHS, their effectiveness is hard to prove. "No one knows for sure how to test the effectiveness of such devices," said Adrian Lund of IIHS. Yet another challenge, incorporating the human element in the use of the technology. Meanwhile, NHTSA is launching a research program to determine which devices are effective. On July 19, the agency solicited data from automakers, suppliers and others. The deadline for comment is August 19. Read the full article at <http://www.autoweek.com/news.cms?newsId=102898>

### **Florida Highway Patrol Updates Lights On Trooper Cars**

The results of a new study have prompted the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) to add red lights and new sirens to its trooper cars. For the past 50 years, the FHP trooper car has been equipped with the blue and clear light bars. However, a FHP study has found that with flashing lights, twice the amount of blue light energy is needed in daylight to be perceived as bright as red. And at night, the situation is reversed. Now, a computer will automatically turn the red lights on during the day and the blue lights on during night. Read the full article at [http://www.sptimes.com/2005/08/08/news\\_pf/State/Difference\\_between\\_da.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2005/08/08/news_pf/State/Difference_between_da.shtml)

### **States Team Up To Prevent Crashes Caused By Animals**

Several states are joining together in an effort to prevent animal-related traffic crashes. Fifteen different transportation departments along with the Federal Highway Administration are funding a new study—"Animal Vehicle Crash Mitigation Using Advanced Technology"—conducted by the Western Transportation Institute (WTI) at Montana State University, Bozeman. Each agency hopes to investigate the feasibility of installing animal detection systems along roadways to reduce vehicle collisions caused by animals. For more information visit

<http://www.coe.montana.edu/wti/wti/display.php?id=4>

### **AAA Launches New Systems To Provide Driving Directions, Fuel Locations**

AAA recently unveiled a new way for motorists to retrieve driving directions online. "AAA Directions" is a free online service open to the general public, including non-AAA members. The system combines detailed maps and directions, providing realistic drive times, current road conditions, and alternative routes to bypass traffic. The announcement follows AAA's recent launch of "The AAA Fuel Finder," a system that reports the cheapest gas within a three, five, or 10 mile radius. It also includes a "Fuel Cost Calculator" that calculates gas cost estimates for a particular trip. More... <http://www.aaamaps.com>

### **ATA: Energy Bill Will Help Trucking Industry Modernize Equipment**

According to the American Trucking (ATA) Associations, the newly passed energy bill will be beneficial in modernizing the industry. The ATA said that the bill will ease the financial burden of buying and modernizing equipment to reduce emissions. Additionally, the push for renewable fuels and increase in oil refining capacity will help keep fuel supplies in-line with demand.

### **National Occupational Safety and Health Week – April 30 To May 6**

The 2006 North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week will take place on April 30-May 6. Sponsored by the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), NAOSH Week focuses on increasing safety awareness and accident prevention in the workplace. For more information visit [www.asse.org/naosh](http://www.asse.org/naosh).

### **Inferior Repair Work Causes Liability Concerns**

According to a report by Automotive Body Repair News (ABRN), a number of auto repairers are finding that a noticeable portion of their work is dedicated to fixing the mistakes made by another repair shops. And the mistakes aren't minor. According to some repairers, they are doing necessary work that was never performed. These "do-over repairs" are negatively impacting the way customers view the repair industry, as well as increasing liability concerns for reputable repair companies. Still, some customers are willing to accept shoddy work because of the low cost and because they can get their vehicles back on the road quicker. Read the full article at

<http://www.abrn.com/abrn/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=173130>

### **News from USDOT**

#### **Long-Awaited Transportation Legislation Passed, Signed**

After nearly a three-year effort, Congress has enacted the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Safety advocates are praising the \$286.4 billion legislation, saying it will save thousands of lives. President Bush signed the legislation on August 10 and said it would spur economic growth by creating jobs in the highway and mass transit fields. According to a statement made by U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta: "This bill contains significant new safety provisions, including the creation of a \$5 billion core highway safety program and powerful incentives for states to increase safety belt usage. State and local officials now have the resources, flexibility, and support they need to make driving safer, fight congestion and ensure that the nation's transportation system keeps pace with the rapidly expanding economy."

### **NHTSA Announces Record Low Highway Fatality Rate**

The fatality rate on the nation's highways in 2004 was the lowest since record-keeping began 30 years ago, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The agency also reported that the number of alcohol-related fatalities dropped for the second consecutive year. According to NHTSA, 42,636 people died on the nation's roadways in 2004, down from 42,884 in 2003. However, the results also found that motorcycle deaths continued to increase, rising 8 percent from 2003. The increase marks the seventh consecutive annual increase in motorcycle deaths. The number of deaths in SUVs also increased 5.6 percent. View the release at [http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/template.MAXIMIZE/menuitem.f2217bee37fb302f6d7c121046108a0c/?javax.portlet.tpst=1e51531b2220b0f8ea14201046108a0c\\_ws\\_MX&javax.portlet.prp\\_1e51531b2220b0f8ea14201046108a0c\\_viewID=detail\\_view&javax.portlet.begCacheTok=token&javax.portlet.endCacheTok=token&itemId=b0d9a91eab275010VgnVCM1000002c567798RCRD&overrideViewName=PressRelease](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/template.MAXIMIZE/menuitem.f2217bee37fb302f6d7c121046108a0c/?javax.portlet.tpst=1e51531b2220b0f8ea14201046108a0c_ws_MX&javax.portlet.prp_1e51531b2220b0f8ea14201046108a0c_viewID=detail_view&javax.portlet.begCacheTok=token&javax.portlet.endCacheTok=token&itemId=b0d9a91eab275010VgnVCM1000002c567798RCRD&overrideViewName=PressRelease) Read the full article at [http://money.cnn.com/2005/08/01/Autos/nhtsa\\_death\\_stats/index.htm](http://money.cnn.com/2005/08/01/Autos/nhtsa_death_stats/index.htm)

### **"You Drink & Drive. You Lose." Crackdown – August 19 to September 5**

NHTSA has prepared a mini-planner to support this year's "You Drink & Drive. You Lose." efforts. Like last year, law enforcement agencies across the country will be cracking down on impaired drivers during the two weeks leading up to the Labor Day weekend (August 19 - September 5). More than 6,000 law enforcement agencies have already made a commitment to participate. NHTSA will publicize the nationwide enforcement effort with paid advertising on TV and radio stations that reach 21-34 year old males—those at greatest risk of being involved in impaired driving crashes. View the mini-planner at <http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org/planners/YDDYLCrackdownPlannerWeb/pages/index.htm>

### **New Publications on DWI/Drug Courts Now Available**

Two reports have been published recently related to the impact of DWI/Drug Courts. Earlier this year, the General Accounting Office (GAO) published its report on Adult Drug Courts, finding that the evidence indicates reductions in recidivism. More recently, the National Drug Court Institute released its second edition of "Painting the Current Picture: A National Report Card on Drug Courts and Other Problem Solving Court Programs in the United States," which found that there are currently 176 DWI Courts in operation, up from a reported 42 in 2003. For more information visit [http://www.ndci.org/publications/10697\\_PaintPict\\_fnl4.pdf](http://www.ndci.org/publications/10697_PaintPict_fnl4.pdf) and <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d05219high.pdf>

### **DOT-Certified Medical Professionals Registry Launched**

The National Academy of DOT Medical Examiners (NADME) has launched the first national online registry of NADME certified DOT medical examiners. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has also voiced its need for such a registry that would list certified medical examiners that are available to examine truck and motor coach drivers. FMCSA was not expected to implement such a registry until 2009. However, with the development of the NADME registry there will no longer be a need for a FMCSA registry. Trucking companies, private carriers, motorcoach operators, and drivers can all utilize the NADME registry. View the full article at [http://www.truckinginfo.com/news/news-detail.asp?news\\_id=55180&news\\_category\\_id=3](http://www.truckinginfo.com/news/news-detail.asp?news_id=55180&news_category_id=3)

### **New Legislation Prevents Discrimination Against Drivers With Diabetes**

A provision in the new transportation legislation will make it easier for diabetics who seek employment as commercial drivers. The provision comes after the American Diabetes Association led a coalition to enable qualified individuals who use insulin to manage their diabetes to operate commercial motor



vehicles in interstate commerce. The provision puts an end to a three-year rule that prevented the vast majority of diabetics from even applying. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) enacted the rule in September 2003 under its Diabetes Exemption Program. In the nearly two years since the FMCSA announced the rule, not a single diabetes exemption has been issued. Read the full article at [http://www.truckinginfo.com/news/news-detail.asp?news\\_id=55182&news\\_category\\_id=3](http://www.truckinginfo.com/news/news-detail.asp?news_id=55182&news_category_id=3)

### **FMCSA: Company Name Now Required On Trucks**

FMCSA now requires that, in addition to DOT numbers, a company name must be displayed on trucks. The rule was officially announced in 2000, but the agency included a five-year grace period to allow truck owners to comply with the new regulation. For truckers who own their own truck but are leased to a company, the requirements call for the name of the leasing company to be displayed. Individual states have the authority to set their own fines for violations.

### **NHTSA Rule Calls For More Thorough License Checks**

NHTSA has issued a final rule mandating states to verify driver eligibility before renewing and issuing any type of driver's license. The goal of the rule is to prevent truck drivers from using multiple licenses to avoid the consequences of traffic violations. Currently, states are only required to check the National Driver Registry (NDR) before issuing licenses. Under the new rule, states will have to check the NDR and the Commercial Driver License Information System (CDLIS).

### **Work-Life:**

### **States Target Teen Drivers And Their Use Of Cell Phones While Driving**

In the wake of new studies that suggest hands free-cell phone use while driving is no safer than handheld use, some jurisdictions are targeting juvenile drivers. The current research on cell phone use behind the wheel is expected to impact the way many state legislatures handle cell phone bans in the future. But for now, a handful of states are passing new laws that prohibit drivers with learner's permits and/or those drivers younger than 18 from using a cell phone while driving. According to the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), 10 states and the District of Columbia have implemented laws pertaining to teen driving and cell phone use laws. Read the full article at <http://www.wirelessweek.com/index.asp?layout=articlePrint&articleID=CA631047>

### **IIHS Tests School-Based Policy To Increase Teen Belt Use**

Teens have a very high motor vehicle crash rate, and statistics tell us that their use of seat belts is generally lower than adults. A recent study by the IIHS tested a school-based strategy to increase seat belt usage among teens. The strategy made school parking privileges contingent on belt use by student drivers and their passengers. Tested at two schools in two states, the policy was found to be effective in states where belt use is low.

Authors: A.T. McCartt, L.L. Geary, and M.G. Solomon Source: Traffic Injury Prevention

### **International Traffic Safety News:**

### **European Road Users Called On To Make Roads Safer**

For the second consecutive year, the European Commission is organizing a summer campaign to promote the European Road Safety Charter. Through the distribution of leaflets at toll stations in France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, European roadway users will be invited to share their ideas on how they individually plan to contribute to safer roads in Europe. Roadway users will have until September 15th to submit their ideas. A jury will evaluate the submissions and the winner will receive a trip for two to the annual European association of tolled motorway companies in Croatia next year, where he or

she will be invited to present their winning submission. For more information visit

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1020&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### **UK Find Intelligent Transportation System Offers A Wealth Of Opportunity**

Experts in the UK are considering a future in which cars could communicate with roadside units to help ease congestion, control driving behaviors, and catch criminals. According to statistics, there has been a 50 percent increase in the number of cars on UK roads over the past 30 years, and projections show another 50 percent growth during the next 15 to 20 years. Experts say relatively cheap technology for an intelligent transportation infrastructure already exists, and is likely to evolve through increased use of in-vehicle equipment for navigation and road-charging purposes. Read the full article at

<http://www.computerweekly.com/Articles/2005/08/09/211307/Roadcongestionchargingcouldbejustthestartascarstakeoverfromtheirdrivers.htm>

### **UK Tests 'Microchipped' License Plates**

The British government is preparing to test "microchipped number plates," high-tech license plates containing microchips capable of transmitting identification numbers and other data to readers more than 300 feet away. The plates incorporate radio frequency identification (RFID). RFID is already in limited use on US roadways. The US Department of Homeland Security issues RFID tags to foreign freight and passenger vehicles as they enter the country. The technology is also used in electronic toll collection systems throughout the United States. Proponents of the tags argue the tags are an effective counter terrorism measure, meanwhile privacy advocates say that the tags are a potential invasion of privacy. Read the full article at

[http://www.wired.com/news/privacy/0,1848,68429,00.html?tw=wn\\_tophead\\_1](http://www.wired.com/news/privacy/0,1848,68429,00.html?tw=wn_tophead_1)